

The Weekly

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2026 Kimberley Process Intersessional Meeting leadership at the opening of the Intersessional Meeting.

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Mobile Legal Aid Clinic Targets Women in Mining-Affected Manicaland

By all appearances, the 21st century was supposed to belong to climate diplomacy. Electric vehicles, renewable energy and “green transitions” dominated international discourse just a few years ago. Today, however, another language has taken centre stage: strategic competition, military security and critical minerals. It’s a conversation often delinked from the global race for Africa’s mineral wealth.

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Why Traceability Isn't Enough for Ethical Diamond Sourcing

The most revealing discussions at the Kimberley Process (KP) Intersessional meeting in Mumbai were not about diamonds themselves, but about trust. Beneath debates over certificates, traceability systems and market confidence lay a deeper anxiety: whether the global diamond governance system still possesses the legitimacy it once claimed.

Kimberley Process Stalls: Reform Efforts Fail as Industry Prioritizes Marketing Over Mining Realities



By Donald Nyarota

At the latest Kimberley Process Intersessional meeting in Mumbai, the guardians of the global diamond trade gathered once again to reassure the world that the industry remains clean, ethical and worthy of consumer trust. Yet beneath polished rhetoric and glittering displays of natural stones, a harsher reality intruded.

The deepest threat to global diamond industry may not come from synthetic gems grown in laboratories, but from its own inability to confront violence, opacity and inequality still embedded in parts of the supply chain.

The Kimberley Process (KP), created in 2003 to prevent trade in “blood diamonds”, was born from the brutal wars that ravaged countries such as Sierra Leone, Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. At the time, it represented an extraordinary experiment in global governance: governments, industry and civil society attempting together to keep conflict diamonds out of world markets.

More than two decades later, however, the KP faces an uncomfortable question: has it become more concerned with defending the reputation of diamonds than with addressing the realities of diamond mining itself?

That concern dominated the intervention of Farai Maguwu, speaking on behalf of the Civil Society Coalition at the close of the Mumbai meeting. His remarks cut through the diplomatic language that often defines the forum

“We have witnessed with deep concern,” he warned, “a growing dynamic in this forum: the push to transform the KP into a sole branding tool for natural diamonds.”

The timing is awkward for the industry. Natural diamond prices have slumped amid weaker consumer demand and the rapid rise of cheaper laboratory-grown alternatives. Mining companies and producing governments fear declining revenues, job losses and shrinking export earnings. The temptation, therefore, is to market natural diamonds more aggressively as authentic, ethical and development-oriented products.

But civil society groups argue that credibility cannot be manufactured through advertising campaigns. It must be earned in mining communities themselves.

The contradiction is increasingly difficult to ignore. While the diamond industry promotes stories of empowerment and sustainability, many mining communities across Africa continue to struggle with environmental degradation, weak labour protections, opaque revenue systems and limited local economic benefit. In artisanal mining zones, falling prices and depleted deposits are deepening poverty. In industrial operations, layoffs and declining corporate social responsibility budgets threaten fragile local economies.

The KP’s defenders point to its successes. The organisation has undoubtedly reduced the role of rebel groups in financing wars through diamonds. It also provides an important platform for trade statistics and diplomatic dialogue. Yet its core definition of “conflict diamonds” remains trapped in the politics of the early 2000s, referring largely to rebel movements fighting legitimate governments. Violence linked to state actors, private security forces or abusive mining practices often falls outside its scope.

That limitation has haunted repeated reform efforts. Once again, the 2025 reform cycle failed to modernise the definition.

Civil society now argues that the KP risks becoming institutionally paralysed precisely when the industry requires deeper legitimacy. Mr Maguwu insisted that “violence inflicted by industry, governments or rebel groups have the same impact on victims.” Marketing campaigns, he implied, cannot erase such realities.

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Zimbabwe's Lithium Ban Begins to Bite, But Loopholes Persist

By Staff Reporter

When the Government of Zimbabwe banned the export of raw lithium ores and introduced strict export quotas for concentrate producers, the policy was framed as a decisive break from the country's long history of exporting raw minerals while importing poverty. Officials argued that the move would force mining companies to invest in local processing, create jobs, and anchor industrialisation around the booming global energy transition.

Recent figures emerging from the sector suggest the policy may already be producing economic results. According to industry data from the Mines and Mineral Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ), lithium's export revenues reportedly jumped by more than 100 percent despite only marginal increases in output, strengthening Government's argument that value addition and tighter regulation can significantly increase national earnings. Before the restrictions, reports indicated that as much as 4,300 tonnes of lithium ore were being mined and exported daily with limited local benefit, raising concerns over leakages, underpricing, and loss of strategic mineral value.

According to Hon. Dr. Polite Kambamura, the Minister of Mines and Mining Development, the export quota system was designed to monitor compliance and curb unethical practices within the lithium sector. The six largest lithium producers were reportedly required to commit to establishing lithium sulphate or lithium carbonate processing facilities by June 2027 as part of Zimbabwe's beneficiation agenda.

Kambamura recently revealed that Government noticed widespread panic in the sector following the 2025 announcement of a full export ban expected to take effect in 2027. "There was panic in the sector which led to a lot of unethical business practices or behavior which included among other things under declarations, under invoicing, some were even shipping out lithium concentrate and stockpiling outside the country," he said.

Some producers reportedly even attempted to convince authorities that viable lithium resources were nearly exhausted.

On paper, the policy appears to be yielding results.

At Kamativi Mine, where lithium operations have intensified in recent years, workers say the export restrictions pushed companies to begin improving working conditions and investing in infrastructure.



Workers at Kamativi Mine in Matebeland North province sit on stockpiles of lithium concentrate awaiting export

Minor upgrades have reportedly been carried out at the plant, including the development of an additional section that separates calcium and tantalum from lithium concentrate, a small but notable step toward downstream processing.

"The ban really worked," said one worker at Kamativi Mine who requested anonymity for fear of victimisation. "The company now gives one-year contracts. We are told after you sign two one-year contracts, one then becomes 'permanent'."

Such remarks reflect how beneficiation policies, when enforced, can have ripple effects beyond mineral processing. They can influence labour practices, skills development, and long-term economic planning in mining communities that have historically experienced precarious employment and extractive exploitation.

Yet beneath the optimism lies growing concern that enforcement gaps may be undermining the policy's credibility.

CNRG understands on good authority that some mining companies have not fully complied with the Government's directive. Instead, certain operators are alleged to have continued stockpiling lithium concentrate while quietly resuming exports through various channels.

Industry insiders claim that despite public commitments to beneficiation, some companies are prioritising rapid extraction and export to take advantage of global lithium demand before stricter oversight mechanisms take full effect.

If true, the developments expose a familiar challenge in Zimbabwe's extractive sector: strong policy pronouncements often collide with weak monitoring capacity and powerful corporate interests.

Mobile Legal Aid Clinic Targets Women in Mining-Affected Manicaland

By Tanaka Ndongera

Thirty-two women gathered in Sakubva on Thursday, 14 May 2026, as the Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) brought its acclaimed Mobile Legal Aid Clinic (MLAC) to Mutare under the rallying motto: Bringing Justice to Your Doorstep. The event, held under the Amplify Change Project, delivered free legal education, rights awareness, and confidential one-on-one legal consultations to women from Mutare and its surrounding mining-affected communities.

The Mutare clinic marks the fourth stop of the MLAC, which has previously visited Penhalonga, Lukosi, and Hwange Town, steadily expanding its reach across communities where women bear the heaviest burden of extractive industry expansion while remaining the least served by justice institutions.

CNRG staff opened the morning session by giving participants a comprehensive overview of the Amplify Change Project and the vision driving the mobile clinic model taking legal expertise into the heart of communities that formal justice systems have long left behind.

Moving on, two lawyers then took to the floor for the clinic's plenary legal education sessions. Advocate Tafadzwa Jaricha opened with a powerful presentation on the Domestic Violence Act, the Sexual Offences Act, and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights. She walked participants through the legal definitions of abuse covering physical, emotional, economic, and psychological harm and stressed that domestic violence is a criminal offence, not a private family matter.

Jaricha addressed the realities of sexual exploitation in mining communities, including sextortion and transactional sex driven by poverty, and emphasised that consent is non-negotiable: coercion, intimidation, or manipulation means there is no consent.

Advocate Nicolene Tambirayi followed with a session on the Maintenance Act, the Administration of Estates Act, and Zimbabwe's National Gender Policy. She explained that both spouses carry a reciprocal duty of support, that unregistered customary law unions are legally recognised for maintenance purposes, and that both parents are equally obligated to maintain their children until the age of majority.



Participants at a Community Mobile Legal Aid Clinic in Sakubva follow proceedings

On inheritance, she outlined the step-by-step process for registering a deceased estate both at the Magistrates' Court for customary law unions and at the Master of the High Court for civil marriages and reminded participants that it is a criminal offence for anyone to interfere with a surviving spouse's right to occupy the matrimonial home during the administration period.

Additionally, the two lawyers demystified court processes and reporting mechanisms, detailing how to apply for a maintenance order at the local Magistrates' Court, how garnishee orders work when a respondent defaults on payments, and how to report gender rights violations to the Victim-Friendly Unit (VFU) and the Zimbabwe Gender Commission. An open question-and-answer session followed, during which participants raised concerns drawn directly from their own experiences.

Furthermore, the afternoon brought the clinic's most intimate dimension private, confidential one-on-one consultations between the lawyers and women who came forward seeking personal legal guidance. Both lawyers conducted back-to-back consultations, and several referrals were documented on the day.

The clinic is part of CNRG's broader commitment under the Amplify Change Project to building feminist consciousness and community-led resistance to violence against women in Zimbabwe's extractive industry regions. With Mutare now added to the map, organisers say the road show is not done. More communities across Manicaland remain on the horizon and justice, it appears, still has ground to cover.

Kimberley Process Stalls: Reform Efforts Fail as Industry Prioritizes Marketing Over Mining Realities



The coalition's demands are neither revolutionary nor particularly radical. They include public access to KP trade statistics, stronger peer-review systems, credible independent audits for mining operations, and greater inclusion of artisanal miners in traceability initiatives. They also call for diamond revenues to benefit producing communities more directly through transparency and local value addition.

Perhaps most revealing was civil society's scepticism toward the industry's current fascination with traceability technologies. Blockchain systems and digital certificates are increasingly promoted as the future of ethical sourcing. Yet the coalition warned against treating traceability as a fashionable buzzword rather than a governance tool. Digitising certificates alone, they argued, does not guarantee accountability or justice.

Indeed, there is a danger that expensive traceability systems could further marginalise artisanal miners, especially in poorer producing countries, while value continues to accumulate downstream among luxury brands and traders.

The meeting's official theme rested on three principles: confidence, compliance and credibility. Civil society proposed a fourth: commitment.

"Compliance requires delivery though progressive realization for impacted communities. Therefore, we urge Participants to add a fourth "C" to this year's "Confidence, Compliance and Credibility" priorities. A "C" for Commitment. Credibility begins within affected communities. This requires commitment and cannot be omitted in the effort to market the product," said Maguwu.

The addition was more than semantic. It reflected growing frustration that the KP often speaks in moral language without matching it with institutional courage. The coalition warned that if the KP cannot deliver meaningful improvements for affected communities, it will struggle to justify the public resources and political support that sustain it.

Diamonds, after all, derive their symbolic value from the idea of permanence and purity. The Kimberley Process now faces a test of whether those qualities can still apply to the governance system meant to protect them.



Members of the KPCSC from left Koo Lemeke, Han Verleyen, Jaff Bamenjo, Farai Maguwu, Joyce Nyamukunda, Laure Greig, Mamadou Lamarana Diallo and S Mounpain pose for a photo at the KP 2026 Intersessional in Mumbai India

Paralegals Trained to Fight GBV in Mining Communities



By Passionate Fuza

In Zimbabwe's extractive industries, women often remain at the receiving end of exploitation, violence, and exclusion due to deeply rooted patriarchal systems and unequal power dynamics that silence their voices and limit their access to justice. As mining activities continue to expand into vulnerable communities, the growing need for community paralegals has become critical in defending women's rights and bridging the gap between marginalized communities and justice systems.

This week, CNRG held a paralegals training in Mutare with ten vibrant women against gender-based violence (GBV) in mining communities. Gender-based violence in mining communities is often fueled by the economic dependency of women on male-dominated structures within the extractive sector. This imbalance leaves many women vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and silence as fear of losing financial support, opportunities, or social protection often prevents them from reporting violence or seeking justice.

The meeting with Paralegals in Mutare brought out a firsthand lived experience of women within the mining communities, as many issues came out. In areas like Tsvingwe and other parts of Penhalonga, there is a prevalent presence of artisanal miners, some of whom come from different places across Zimbabwe to mine gold in Penhalonga. Women living in these areas fear walking after 6 pm as there are growing cases of sexual abuse and robbery. Even during the day, women who are into artisanal mining and selling to them are often sexually assaulted by men.

Some paralegals reported that the women's economic experiences leave young girls vulnerable and easily swayed by money from men in mining on their way to and from school.

As a result, there has been an increasing number of early child marriages and school dropouts of young girls. Statistics have shown that, last year, there were 90 school dropouts at Tsvingwe High School, 60 of them being girls. Because of this, the young girls who are teenagers are being sexually exploited and have children at a young age, some of whom don't ever see the father of the child again, leaving an extra burden of unpaid care work on the mother, who becomes the grandmother.

CNRG brought in professional facilitators, lawyers, to unpack gender laws, as well as issues of property rights and maintenance procedures, and laws to help paralegals with expertise to help in the communities from below, sharing knowledge with other women who face similar challenges in extractive communities.

There are upcoming concerns women are facing when reporting issues of gender-based violence and sexual assault to the victim-friendly units. The Victim Friendly Unit, which is supposed to protect young women and girls, has now become hostile as officers now judge, intimidate, and harass women based on their dressing, which is beside the point, nor does it justify abuse. It is also noted to be hard to report an artisanal miner on rape and sexual abuse, as most of them stay elsewhere.

As CNRG, we remain committed to amplifying the voices of women and communities affected by extractive industries, demanding justice, dignity, and accountability in natural resource governance. True development cannot exist where women continue to bear the burden of environmental harm, economic exclusion and gender-based violence. The future of mining and development in Zimbabwe must be people-centered, inclusive, and grounded in the protection of human rights for present and future generations.

Beyond Blockchain: Why Traceability Isn't Enough for Ethical Diamond Sourcing

By Staff Reporter

The most revealing discussions at the Kimberley Process (KP) Intersessional meeting in Mumbai were not about diamonds themselves, but about trust. Beneath debates over certificates, traceability systems and market confidence lay a deeper anxiety: whether the global diamond governance system still possesses the legitimacy it once claimed.

For the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition (KPCSC), the crisis facing the diamond industry is not merely commercial. It is institutional. As natural diamond prices weaken and synthetic alternatives expand their market share, the industry has responded with increasingly polished branding campaigns designed to reassure consumers. Yet civil society representatives in Mumbai argued that the Kimberley Process risks mistaking public relations for reform.

One of the coalition's sharpest criticisms concerned transparency, or the lack of it. Despite the KP's central role in regulating the global diamond trade, its vast database of trade statistics remains largely inaccessible to public scrutiny. Civil society groups argue that opening these records could help expose illicit financial flows, smuggling networks, transfer mispricing and trade-based money laundering that continue to plague parts of the sector.

In an era when governments across the world are demanding greater transparency in critical mineral supply chains, the opacity of the diamond trade increasingly appears anachronistic. The coalition warned that credibility cannot coexist with secrecy.

The debate over traceability also exposed widening tensions within the industry. Diamond companies and technology firms have embraced digital traceability systems as a solution to declining consumer confidence. But the KPCSC cautioned that traceability is not inherently ethical. A blockchain can record the movement of a diamond, but it cannot by itself guarantee that communities benefited from its extraction or that environmental damage was prevented.

Civil society delegates warned against imposing costly technological systems that could exclude artisanal and small-scale miners (ASM), who remain among the most economically vulnerable actors in the supply chain. If poorly designed, new compliance systems could entrench inequalities rather than solve them.



Kimberley Process leadership at the opening of the Intersessional.

The coalition also highlighted a growing disconnect between mining governance and local realities in producing countries. While governments and corporations speak enthusiastically about beneficiation and responsible sourcing, many communities living near diamond operations continue to experience unemployment, environmental degradation and weak participation in decisions over mining revenues.

Particularly significant was the coalition's insistence that the KP should not isolate itself from broader debates on mineral governance. Producing countries across Africa are revising mining laws, demanding greater local value addition and tightening oversight over extractive industries. Yet the KP, critics argue, often appears slow to adapt to these changing political and economic realities.

In Mumbai, civil society's message was unmistakable: the future relevance of the Kimberley Process will depend less on its marketing strategy than on its willingness to confront uncomfortable truths about power, inequality and accountability in the diamond trade itself.



Mr Farai Maguwu deputy coordinator of the KPCSC delivers opening remarks at the Intersessional meeting in Mumbai, India

Poetry Corner

How long have we wept?
How long have we worn the garment of vulnerability?
Bound by a system of bondage, a tradition of servitude, held captive in mentality, taught that silence was safer than truth,
a quiet grave for unspoken hostility.

Where freedom of speech, the sacred right of self-expression, was buried beneath the dust of old and unquestioned customs.

And silence

Silence in passivity became submission to injustice

Did we commit a crime?

If yes, then what is our crime?

If no, then why— why all this poverty and misery, why all this oppression and tribulation?

For trouble started during that time—

The colonial era as they say

The time they came to loot our stones,

Or perhaps these minerals, yes, these resources.

The black stone, our pride, yet a curse in disguise.

For I am just a poor woman, working under the mining, mining what is not mine, in a land I cannot even call my own.

A mother, a sister, a widow— all objected and neglected due to so-called circumstances,
and yet we wake up to the harsh realization of reality:

that is Zero Resources Accountability, equals no community sustainability

Our communities Vast with minerals,

So endowed with precious stones,

Yes our communities

Filled with riches and wealth meant to bring empowerment and development—

But abundance did not become prosperity

For our people lack entitlement of our sons and daughters and all generations yet to come.

How many of us can raise a hand

A hand, to ask a question or give an answer?

How many can stand to question the oppression manifesting as neglect?

And in the middle of this silence, we, the youth, inherit the climate of consequence.

For climate change now speaks in a language disruption

Droughts and floods an unusual contradiction of destruction

Food insecurity where harvest once stood, water scarcity where rivers once flowed,

And uncertainty

Settling across the community

As we long for simple generosity.

We are told of intersections—climate change, critical minerals, community rights, governance, accountability.

And still we ask—who carries responsibility for what has been broken, destroyed, delayed

Our rights denied

And in this tension, peace becomes fragile.

A force like compression

But we are more than just witnesses, we are storytellers.

Carrying evidence in our voices and sight

The power of digital literacy, democracy, against this plight.

For peace building is not silence no submission

But rather voice, justice in motion, and youth at the centre of decision-making.

And we rise, architects of climate justice, natural resource accountability, and peace.



Enellert Mumba is a member of Shanganu Arts Trust based in Hwange